

REMARKS

Claims 1-64 and 68-78 are pending herein. Claims 65-67 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 68-78 are new claims. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to file divisional applications to the withdrawn claims.

Applicants have rewritten original Claim 4 as an independent claim (new Claim 68) containing all of the limitations of the base claim, as suggested by the Examiner to render the claim allowable. Furthermore, since new Claims 69-78 are dependent upon Claim 68, an allowable claim, Claims 69-78 are also allowable. Applicants have also amended Claims 2-64 to replace the term "embodiment" with "claim". Claim 25 has also been further amended to capitalize the various aromatic solvents therein.

Applicants have presented new Claim 78, which states an alkanolamine of the general formula $RNHR'$, which according to the definition of R and R', is a dialkanolamine. Support for new Claim 78 can be found in original Claim 2. Nowhere in Oftring et al. is there any disclosure, motivation, or suggestion of using a dialkanolamine. On the contrary, Oftring et al. merely discloses, as one of many possibilities for formula III, in Column 3, lines 6-11, a mono alkanolamine. Formula III does not at all provide for a dialkanolamine as is currently claimed in Claim 78. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 78 is allowable over Oftring et al. and the rejection of the same should be withdrawn.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 44-48 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph because she asserts that the specification does not reasonably provide enablement for the metal silicate absorbent based on the weight percent of the reaction mixture as a whole. Applicants have amended page 11 of the specification to provide for the given weight percents of metal silicate absorbent based on the weight percent of the reaction mixture as a whole. Support for this amendment can be found in original claims 44-48. Since Claims 44-48 are now enabled by the specification, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

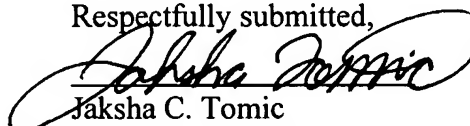
The Examiner has also rejected Claims 1-3, 11-13, 18-23 and 28-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Oftring et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,034,257 "Oftring et al.". In a telephone conference with the Examiner and the undersigned attorney on November 28, 2006, the Examiner acknowledged that the listing of rejected claims in paragraph 6 of the Office Action was inaccurate; and that the rejected claim range of 18-33, should instead be 18-23. Furthermore the Examiner acknowledged that the listing of Claims in paragraph 7 of the Office Action was inaccurate in that the claimed ranges of 4-5 and 8-10 should instead be the single

range of 4-10. The Examiner had indicated this change in the Office Action Summary by a handwritten and initialed correction.

The Examiner has stated that Oftring et al. teaches a process of preparing fatty amides wherein the reaction mixture is purified in a process including the addition of an aqueous salt solution and an adjustment of the pH of the reaction mixture. It is respectfully indicated to the Examiner that Oftring et al. does not disclose or suggest the use of a non-polar solvent such as is claimed in the subject invention. On the contrary, the only solvent disclosed by Oftring et al. is the use of an organic phase separation medium. Oftring et al. identifies the organic phase separation medium as any suitable organic compound, in particular aliphatic aldehydes and ketones, for example 2-butanone (see column 5, lines 42-47). 2-butanone is a polar solvent. Nowhere does Oftring et al. disclose a non-polar solvent. Applicants have demonstrated in their specification the advantages associated with using a non-polar solvent, (see Table I on page 15). Examples 1-4 therein demonstrate the *dramatically* reduced levels of diethanolamine and sodium that are present when a non-polar solvent is used compared to Comparative Examples 1-3 which use no solvent. In view of the fact that Oftring et al. does not disclose or suggest a non-polar solvent, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1-64 and 68-78 are unanticipated and non-obvious over the same. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claims 1-64 be respectfully withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that Claims 1-64 and 68-78 are allowable over the prior art of record. An early favorable examination on the merits of the subject matter of Claims 1-64 and 68-78 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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